

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for processing communications received by a user over a communications link, which communications include identification information, the apparatus comprising:

- (i) an input for receiving communications;
- (ii) extracting means for extracting identification information associated with a ~~first~~ communication received at the input;
- (iii) ~~eategorising~~categorizing means for ~~eategorising~~categorizing the ~~first~~received communication based on the extracted identification information and recommending an action based on the ~~eategorisation~~categorization;
- (iv) means for monitoring user response to the ~~first~~ communication and operable to measure the time taken for the user to review and/or respond to a communication;
- (v) modifying means for modifying the ~~eategorising~~categorization of the categorizing means in accordance with a monitored user response to the ~~first~~ communication, wherein, in response to receipt of such that when a second subsequent communication having ~~identifying~~identification information matching that of the ~~first~~earlier communication is ~~received~~, the ~~monitored user response is recommended by the eategorising means~~apparatus is operable to recommend an action based on the modified categorization.

2. (Currently Amended) Apparatus ~~according to~~as in claim 1, wherein the extracting means includes comparing means for comparing the extracted identification information with a plurality of predetermined identification information types so as to determine a match between one of the plurality of predetermined identification types and the extracted identification information.

3 (Currently Amended) Apparatus ~~according to~~as in claim 2, wherein the extracting means ~~utilises~~utilizes fuzzy logic to determine said match.

4. (Currently Amended) Apparatus ~~according to~~as in claim 1, wherein ~~each of the first and second~~ communications is either one of an email or a telephone call.

5. (Currently Amended) Apparatus ~~according to~~as in claim 4, wherein the identification information includes at least one of:

- (a) a subject of the email;
- (b) an address of a sender of the email;
- (c) a recipient list of the email/ and/or
- (d) a calling line identifier.

6. (Currently Amended) Apparatus ~~according to~~as in claim 5, wherein the comparing means is operable to compare any or all of:

- (a) a sender with a predetermined list of senders;
- (b) a recipient list with a predetermined list of recipients;
- (c) a subject with a predetermined list of subjects; and/or
- (d) a calling line identifier with a predetermined list of numbers.

7. (Currently Amended) Apparatus ~~according to~~ as in claim 1 wherein the ~~categorising~~ categorizing means includes a Bayes net, which Bayes net is operable to output an array of values indicative of a priority status for the first communication based on inputs indicative of the extracted identification information and the time taken for the user to review the first communication.

Claim 8 – cancelled.

9. (Currently Amended) Apparatus ~~according to~~ as in claim 1, further comprising means for automatic message transmission, such that when a communication is received from a sender that has been identified for automatic message transmission, a predetermined message is automatically returned in response to the communication.

10. (Currently Amended) A method of processing communications received by a user over a network, which communications include identification information, the method comprising ~~the steps of:~~

- (i) extracting the identification information ~~offrom~~ a first communication received by the user;
- (ii) ~~categorising~~ categorizing the first communication, ~~and recommending an action based on said categorisation~~ based on the extracted identification information;
- (iii) ~~observing an actual action of~~ time taken for the user in response to respond to the recommendation communication;

and

- (iv) ~~modifying parameters within the categorising means such that, upon the~~  
categorization associated with the extracted identification information in  
accordance with the observed time taken for response; and
- (v) upon receipt of a second subsequent communication having identical identifying  
information to that of the first an earlier communication, the actual recommending  
a user action is recommended by the categorising means based on the modified  
categorization.

Claims 11-16 – cancelled.

17. (Currently Amended) A computer program comprising a set of instructions to  
cause a computer to perform the method ~~according to~~ defined in claim 10.

18. (Currently Amended) A computer program ~~according to~~ as in claim 17 placed on  
a carrier, which carrier includes any one of:

- (i) a CD-ROM storage medium;
- (ii) a hard disk drive storage medium;
- (iii) a 3.5 inch diskette storage medium;
- (iv) a protectively-encased tape cartridge storage medium;
- (v) a zip drive disk storage medium;
- (vi) a jazz drive diskette storage medium;
- (vii) an optical disk storage medium;
- (viii) auxiliary storage memory.

19. (New) Apparatus as in claim 1 further comprising a diary for logging user availability, said categorizing means being triggered by a received communication to review a user's availability and to base a recommended response with respect to the received communication at least in part on said user availability.

20. (New) Apparatus as in claim 1 further comprising means for storing user inputs with respect to extracted identification information.

21. (New) Apparatus as in claim 19 wherein, in the case of at least one form of availability status, or where the stored identification information has been flagged by a user input accordingly, the apparatus triggers the recommended response of the categorizing means without receiving user input.

22. (New) A method as in claim 10 including the step of storing the observed time taken as a function of the extracted identification information.

23. (New) A method as in claim 22 in which said categorizing step (ii) includes:

(a) for at least one of the extracted identification information, retrieving stored time data associated therewith;

(b) operating the categorizing means in accordance with the extracted identification information and with the retrieved time data;

(c) examining an output from the categorizing means, which output includes a plurality of response identifiers corresponding to times for response; and

(d) extracting a response identifier corresponding to the highest value in said output.

24. (New) A method as in claim 23 in which the categorizing means includes two Bayes nets, a first of which categorizes in accordance with the extracted identification information and a second of which categorizes in accordance with the retrieved time data, such that the operating step (b) comprises operating each of the first and second categorizing means and combining outputs therefrom.

25. (New) A method as in claim 24 in which said step (iv) of modifying the categorization associated with the extracted identification information includes modifying each of the first and second Bayes nets in accordance with the observed time.

26. (New) A digital data carrier containing computer executable code for loading into a computer for the performance of the method of claim 10.